

## **LADDER SAFETY**

We have all worked with ladders at some time in our lives, either at work or at home. The following are some tips that may make your interaction with ladders less hazardous:

- Before using a ladder, inspect it for faults, such as broken rungs or rails. If it is an extension ladder, inspect the pulleys, ropes and locks for excessive wear. Also, check the footings and pads to make sure they still provide a non-skid surface. If any defect is found, the ladder should be tagged unsafe and taken out of service. If it cannot be fixed, make sure it is disposed of properly.
- When setting up a ladder, make sure the ground it is set upon is level and stable. Do not set the ladder up on a muddy surface or you may find yourself falling over. Do not use bricks or other material to raise the height of the ladder. If it is not tall enough, you are using the wrong ladder.
- The ladder should reach a minimum of three feet above the "point of support" and should be secured at this point.
- When using extension ladders, abide by the 1:4 rule. This means if you are using a 12 foot ladder, the base should be three feet from the structure. Some ladders provide a picture guide on the ladder itself to assist you in this. When using a stepladder, make sure the folding cross braces are locked in the proper position before you step onto it.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending, and have both hands free to grasp it securely. If you need tools, they should be carried in a tool belt or pulled up with a rope once you have reached your destination.
- Remember the "3-Point Rule": At least two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, should be in contact with the ladder at all times.
- Keep your body between the side rails of the ladder. This reduces the chance of tipping it over and/or falling off.
- Do not climb higher than the third rung from the top on straight or extension ladders or the second tread from the top on stepladders.

By following the above rules, you greatly reduce your chances of being injured while working on ladders. Remember, the life you save will be your own!